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United States
Department of
Agriculture

Food and
Consumer
Service

DEC 22 1997

Mountain Plains
Region

Reply to
Attn. of: SP 98-09

1244 Speer Blvd.
Denver, CO
80204-3581

Subject: Family Style Meal Service in Head Start Centers and Residential Child Care Institutions (RCCIs) in the National School Lunch Program (NSLP) and School Breakfast Program (SBP)

To: STATE AGENCY DIRECTORS - Colorado ED, Iowa, Kansas, (Child Nutrition Programs) Missouri ED, Montana OPI, Nebraska ED, North Dakota, South Dakota, Utah and Wyoming

This memorandum is to clarify that it is permissible to serve meals family style in RCCIs that participate in the NSLP and SBP. As national policy, FNS Instruction 783-9 REV 2, Family Style Meal Service in the Child and Adult Care Food Program (copy attached), is to be followed for Head Start Centers and RCCIs in the school meal programs as well. This Instruction sets forth the following minimum practices for reimbursable family style meals:

- Enough food must be placed on the table to enable each child to receive the minimum portion of each component and to accommodate the supervising adult(s) if they eat with the children.
- Children must initially be offered the full minimum portion of each component.
- If the child does not initially accept the entire minimum portion of any component(s), it is the responsibility of the supervising adult(s) to actively encourage the child to take the full portion during the course of the meal.

These requirements are consistent with the Head Start Program's policy on family style meals and should, therefore, be applied to all situations in which a Head Start Center is participating in the NSLP or the SBP. As national policy, these requirements should also be applied to family style services in RCCIs. However, State agencies may adopt more stringent standards.

STATE AGENCY DIRECTORS

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Please contact our office if you have any questions.

Ann C. De Groat
ANN C. DEGROAT
Regional Director
Child Nutrition Programs

Attachment

ACTION BY: Regional Directors
Special Nutrition Programs

SOURCE CITATION: Section 226.20

Family Style Meal Service in the
Child and Adult Care Food Program


The Child and Adult Care Program (CACFP) has long been recognized for its nutritional goals of providing nutritious meals to children and helping them establish good eating habits at a young age. Family style meal service provides a further opportunity to enhance these goals by encouraging a pleasant eating environment that will support and promote mealtime as a learning experience.

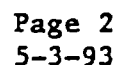
Family style is a type of meal service which allows children to serve themselves from common platters of food with assistance from supervising adults setting the example. In A Planning Guide for Food Service in Child Care Centers (FNS-64), the chapter, "Make Mealtime a Happy Time," provides guidance for family style meal service in the CACFP. Family style meal service encourages supervising adults to set a personal example and provide educational activities that are centered around foods. This approach allows children to identify, and be introduced to new foods, new tastes, and new menus, while developing a positive attitude toward nutritious foods, sharing in group eating situations, and developing good eating habits.

Unlike cafeteria lines, unitized meals, and pre-set service, the family style method affords some latitude in the size of initial servings because replenishment is immediately available at each table. Even when a complete family style service is not possible or practical, it may be useful to offer a component or components in a family style manner particularly when smaller children are being served or when a new food item is being introduced. This latitude must be exercised in compliance with the following practices, at a minimum:

- (1) A sufficient amount of prepared food must be placed on each table to provide the full required portions (226.20) of each of the food components for all children at the table, and to accommodate supervising adult(s) if they eat with the children.

DISTRIBUTION: 5,6,11,12	MANUAL MAINTENANCE INSTRUCTIONS: Remove FNS Instruction 783-9, Rev. 1, from Manual. Insert this Instruction.	RESPONSIBLE FOR PREPARATION AND MAINTENANCE: CND-100	Page 1 5-3-93
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STANLEY C. GARNETT
Director
Child Nutrition Division



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Special Nutrition Programs

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